

CITYVIEW

City of Hamilton Planning and Development Department

1996

Housing and Residential Development

Hamilton residents take pride in the quality of their homes and neighbourhoods. Hamilton is a community with many different neighbourhoods and unique housing styles and choices. How we as individuals and families regard our homes and neighbourhoods is a key element of successful city planning in Hamilton. There are a number of important housing and development issues that are confronting the City of Hamilton which are highlighted in this brochure.

Where Should the City Grow?

Since 1960 when the City of Hamilton's present southern boundary was established, the Hamilton Mountain has experienced significant population and housing growth. But the Mountain is filling up. And, sometime over the next 10-15 years depending on economic trends, Hamilton will no longer have large vacant parcels of land to accommodate new development. What should the City do?

There are two schools of thought on this issue. One option is for Hamilton to expand its municipal boundaries in order to accommodate future new growth. The second option is to focus on redevelopment and intensification opportunities within the existing City, in essence to make better use of the land resources we already have.

Expanding Hamilton's municipal boundaries is not without precedent. Over the City's past 150 years history, when

community growth reached the "end" of the municipal boundaries, the City annexed or assumed control of additional lands.

Housing consumers continue to show a strong preference for new houses in newer areas rather than older homes in established neighbourhoods. But redevelopment or intensification is a cost effective manner of accommodating new residential growth as the "hard services" (sewer, water, roadways, etc.) and "soft services" (schools, libraries, parks, etc.) are already in place. *How should the City of Hamilton grow in the future?*

**Do You Work in Your Home?
Would You Mind if Your
Neighbour Did?**

More and more people are working out of their homes. This is a trend that is occurring not only in Hamilton but throughout North America and the number of "home-based businesses" is growing. Why a home-based business?



HAMILTON'S PLAN FOR TOMORROW

There is minimal up-front risk for the business at start-up; it is a cost effective way to provide specialized services or goods; and, it provides flexibility for individuals seeking to generate additional income.

We all know people who operate a business in one form or another out of their homes - the insurance agent, the hairdresser, the interior designer, the small appliance repair person, etc. For the most part, these types of home-based businesses are compatible within a residential neighbourhood. But where should the City draw the line on promoting and allowing home-based businesses? *Are certain home-based business activities not appropriate in a residential neighbourhood? What criteria should be used to ensure that the City is flexible to accommodate home-based businesses but at the same time preserve the integrity of residential neighbourhoods?*

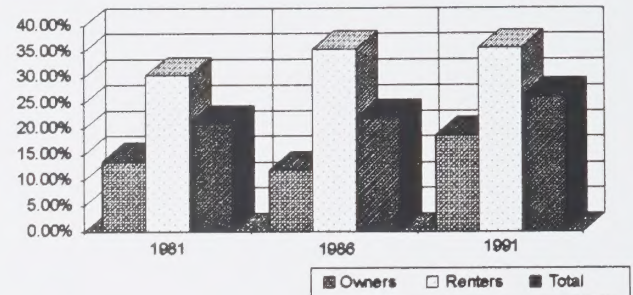
The current Hamilton Official Plan permits "Home Occupations" within residential areas as long as the "Home Occupation will be carried on within a dwelling unit only by an owner occupying the dwelling, and employing only immediate family members that also occupy the dwelling". Further, the Official Plan adds that Home Occupations "will occupy only a limited floor area of the dwelling" and "will not detract from the residential character of the area." *Should the Hamilton Official Plan be revised?*

Housing Affordability

For three-quarters of Hamilton households, housing affordability is not an issue. A household is having a housing affordability problem if they are devoting more than 30 percent of their gross household income to rental payments for renter households or mortgage principal, interest and property taxes (PIT) for owner households. Not

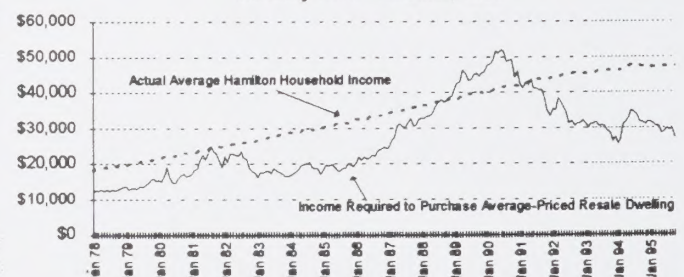
surprisingly, households who experience housing affordability problems generally have lower incomes. However, since 1981 the proportion of Hamilton owner and renter households that experience housing affordability problems has increased.

Households Having Housing Affordability Problems



Housing affordability is also a key concern to households seeking to purchase their first home and enter the ownership housing market. In the late 1980's, ownership housing in Hamilton became "unaffordable". Since that time, as a result of declining house prices and lower mortgage interest rates, ownership housing for potential first-time buyers has become more "affordable".

Affordability of Ownership Housing in Hamilton
January 1978 - October, 1995



Is there a role for the City of Hamilton to address housing affordability problems experienced by Hamilton households? Are there specific measures that the City can implement to ensure households have sufficient incomes to meet their housing

costs, or should the City focus on reducing the cost of housing? What actions can the City follow in this area? How should Hamilton's Official Plan respond to housing affordability concerns?

Where Should "Accessory Apartments" be Permitted in Hamilton?

In June, 1991, Hamilton City Council adopted a "Housing Intensification Strategy" that revised zoning by-law requirements to permit one second unit or "accessory apartment" in single-detached dwellings throughout the City. However, the units were to be a minimum of 700 square feet in area, a maximum 50% of the front yard could be used for parking and one parking space was provided for each dwelling unit. This initiative was introduced to ease the burden in the older parts of the City, as previously second units or accessory apartments were only permitted in single-detached structures built prior to 1940.

The Provincial Government in May, 1994 passed legislation that took away the City's responsibility to control the "the erecting, locating or use of two residential units in a detached house, semi-detached house or a row house". The current Provincial Government has introduced legislation that would restore the legal ability of municipalities, including the City of Hamilton, to regulate second units within dwellings.

The creation of second units within existing dwellings is one way of creating low cost rental accommodation and allows homeowners an opportunity to supplement their incomes. However, there is a concern that these units negatively alter the character of stable residential

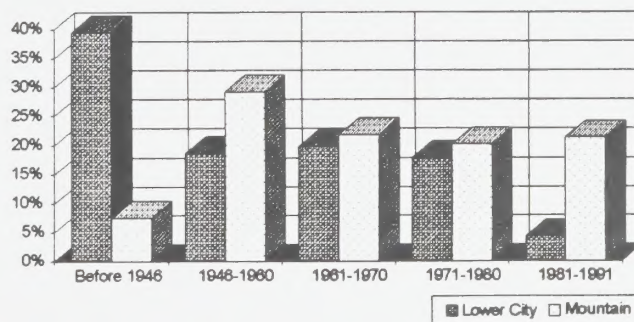
neighbourhoods if left unregulated by the municipality.

Should the City of Hamilton continue to permit second units within single-detached dwellings?

Hamilton's Housing Stock is Getting Old

Seven in ten "dwelling units" (which includes apartments and houses) in Hamilton were built over 20 years ago; one in four dwelling units in Hamilton were built prior to 1946. In the Lower City, close to 40 percent of all dwelling units were constructed prior to 1946. As Hamilton's stock of housing continues to age, increased expenditures by homeowners and landlords will be required for maintenance, renovation and repair.

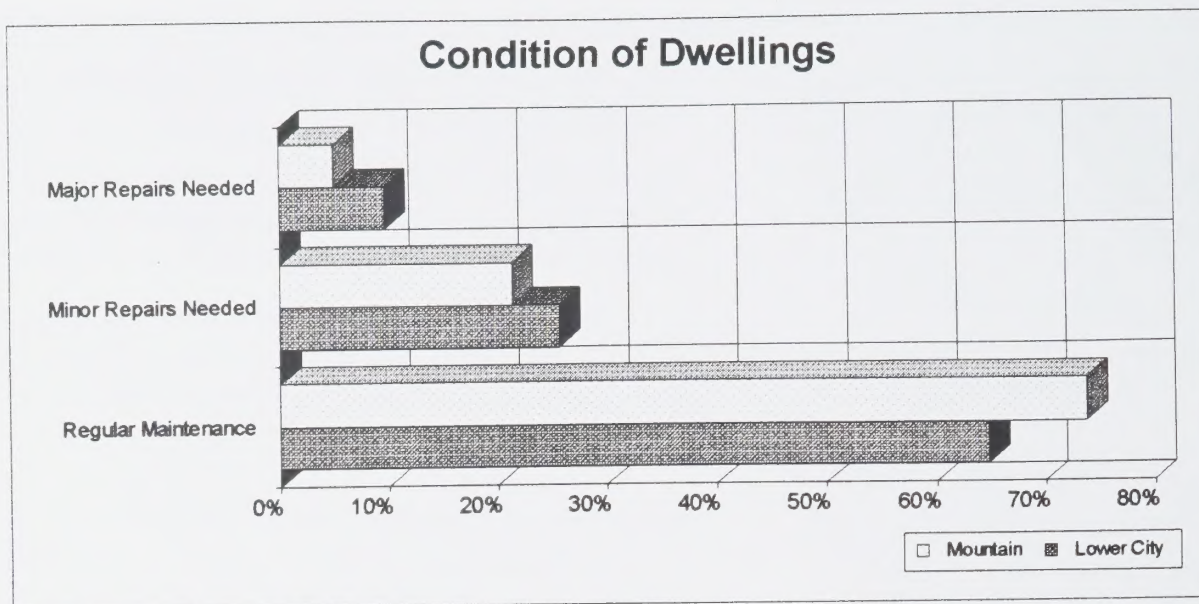
When Homes Were Built



According to the Census of Canada, nearly 10 percent of all dwelling units in the Lower City require "major repairs" and a further 25 percent require "minor repairs". Although the stock of housing on the Hamilton Mountain is generally younger, 5 percent of all dwellings require major repairs and a further 21 percent require minor repairs.



HAMILTON'S PLAN FOR TOMORROW



Renovation of Hamilton's stock of older housing is a key contributor to neighbourhood stability and revitalization. Older housing is also generally less costly to purchase than new homes and represents an important source of ownership housing for first-time homebuyers. Renovating and upgrading older homes increases their value and overall enhances the attractiveness and desirability of a particular neighbourhood.

Since 1974, the City of Hamilton has been administering several rehabilitation programs which provide grants and/or loans for owners of residential properties with a primary goal of extending the useful life of the building for an additional 15 years.

- ☛ How important is it to maintain and promote Hamilton's older housing stock?
- ☛ What other actions can the City of Hamilton undertake to ensure the community's stock of housing is well-maintained and up-to-date?
- ☛ How can City planning policy encourage renovation and repair of Hamilton's housing stock?
- ☛ What should Hamilton's new Official Plan say about preserving and enhancing the housing stock?



For further information on this brochure, please contact Keith Exance at (905) 546-4158.

CITYVIEW

CityView Hamilton's Plan for Tomorrow is your opportunity to present your ideas and thoughts on the future of Hamilton.

Your ideas will ultimately form the basis of a new Official Plan for the City of Hamilton.

Staff of Hamilton's Planning and Development Department are available to answer your questions on any facet of CityView.

Ways to Contact Us...

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